



U.S. Department of Justice  
United States Attorney  
District of Kansas

## NEWS RELEASE

Eric Melgren, U.S. Attorney

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## INTERNET CHILD PORNOGRAPHY INDICTMENTS A WARNING THAT PREDATORS ARE STALKING OUR CHILDREN

WICHITA, KAN. – United States Attorney Eric Melgren today announced 16 indictments against adults in Kansas, including 15 separate, unrelated cases against individuals accused of receiving or distributing child pornography over the Internet and one case of a man accused of traveling to Kansas to have sex with what he thought was a 13-year-old girl.

“We cannot show you the cruel and loathsome images of child pornography that our investigators have collected in recent months,” Melgren said during a news conference in Wichita. “Each one is an enduring record of an act of sexual abuse against a child.”

According to the indictments, investigators found thousands of images of child pornography stored on defendants’ computer hard drives. Both male and female children – even infants and children who had not reached puberty – were shown suffering abuse and exploitation at the hands of sexual predators.

Once confined mainly to the shelves of a few adult bookstores or the collections of a handful of hardcore offenders, child pornography now has become readily available to anyone with a computer and a connection to the Internet, Melgren said. At the very least, collectors of child pornography are guilty of violating federal law, he said. From a broader moral perspective, he said, they are the consumers who drive the market for child pornography and give sexual predators another reason to search for new victims.

Many law enforcement authorities, Melgren said, see no clear psychological line of distinction between offenders who have been convicted of collecting child pornography and those convicted of sexually abusing or exploiting children. Studies have shown that both groups take pleasure in images of the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, both

(More)

use computers and the Internet to seek out other people who share their interest in collecting and trading images of child pornography, and both groups are so deeply involved in their crimes that they keep up their habit even at the risk of becoming the target of federal prosecution.

In a study sponsored by the Federal Bureau of Prisons, Melgren said, 76 percent of offenders who had been convicted of possessing child pornography or crossing state lines to have sex with a minor said they also had committed offenses involving direct sexual contact with children. On average, they reported having committed more than 30 such offenses involving direct contact with children.

Melgren said today's indictments should alert the community to a danger that is growing rapidly and that parents, educators and other Kansas need to know more about.

"We are using this occasion to draw attention to a pervasive and serious problem in our communities, which has as often as not remained below the radar," Melgren said.

The full text of Melgren's remarks is available in the press release section of the U.S. Attorney's Web site at [www.usdoj.gov/usao/ks](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/ks). Information on each of the 16 indictments also is available there.